

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 288586

64

ORIGIN SS-15

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /016 R

66011

DRAFTED BY:NEA/ARP:DPMOLINEAUX

APPROVED BY:NEA-MR DUBS

S/S-O:DLMACK

----- 093014

P 190230Z DEC 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 288586

EXDIS FOR ATHERTON FROM DUBS

FOLLOWING REPEAT SECSTATE 288586 ACTION USDEL SECRETARY TOSEC

230309 07 DEC 75

QUOTE

S E C R E T STATE 288586 TOSEC 230309

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MASS, SA, YE

SUBJECT: BRIEFING MEMORANDUM: CRISIS IN SAUDI-YEMENI
RELATIONS

FOR THE SECRETARY THROUGH SISCO FROM ATHERTON

1. FAILURE OF SAG TO MOVE FORWARD ON COMMITMENT IN PRINCIPLE TO FINANCE MILITARY MODERNIZATION IN YAR, COUPLED WITH RECENT SAUDI ACTIVITY SEEN AS INTERFERENCE IN YAR DOMESTIC AFFAIRS, HAS PRODUCED CRISIS IN SAG-YARG RELATIONS AND APPARENT YARG AGREEMENT TO ACCEPT SOVIET OFFER OF SUBSTANTIAL
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 288586

WEAPONS DELIVERIES. DENOUEMENT IS NOT YET CLEAR BUT, IN

WORST SCENARIO WHICH WE HAVE BEEN TAKING STEPS OUTLINED BELOW TO HEAD OFF, COULD RESULT IN BASIC SHIFT OF YARG DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLICIES TOWARDS SOVIET BLOC, STRENGTHENING OF STRATEGIC SOVIET POSITION IN INDIAN OCEAN NORTHWEST QUADRANT, AND NEW INSTABILITY IN THE ARABIAN PENINSULA.

2. FOR SOME TIME SAG, YARG AND WE HAVE BEEN AGREED ON NECESSITY OF MILITARY MODERNIZATION PROGRAM FOR YAR WITH EQUIPMENT TO BE SUPPLIED LARGELY BY U.S. AND PAID FOR BY SAG. A 1973 SAUDI SURVEY TEAM PROPOSED DOLS 800 MILLION PROGRAM, WHICH WE CONSIDERED EXCESSIVE. IN SEPT 1974, IN

RESPONSE TO SAUDI REQUEST, WE PROVIDED SAG WITH LETTERS OF OFFER TOTALING SOME DOLS 80 TO 100 MILLION FOR PURCHASE OF U.S. EQUIPMENT FOR YAR FORCES. (THESE OFFERS EXPIRED A FEW MONTHS LATER.) A U.S. MILITARY TEAM VISITED YEMEN THE FOLLOWING MONTH AND CONFIRMED THE DESIRABILITY OF U.S.-SAG COOPERATION IN STRENGTHENING THE YAR FORCES. SAUDIS, HOWEVER, DECIDED TO UNDERTAKE ANOTHER SURVEY OF THEIR OWN, AND WE ARE STILL AWAITING RESULTS THEREOF.

3. OUR OWN ROLE HAS BEEN TO EVIDENCE OUR READINESS TO ASSIST YEMENIS AND SAUDIS IN COOPERATIVE PROGRAM, AND TO STIMULATE SAUDI ACTION, BUT NOT GET INVOLVED DIRECTLY BETWEEN THEM. IN LATE MAY OF THIS YEAR, WITH SAUDI REPORT LONG OVERDUE, AMBASSADOR AKINS PRESENTED DETAILED LETTER TO PRINCE SULTAN PROPOSING STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH TO ARMS PROGRAM FOR YEMEN. IT PROPOSED STARTING WITH SMALL "IMPAC PACKAGE" FOR PROMPT DELIVERY WITHIN TWO MONTHS, TO BE FOLLOWED BY MORE SUBSTANTIAL DELIVERIES OF INFANTRY WEAPONS AND ENGINEERING EQUIPMENT. WE URGED SAUDIS TO PUT FIRST EMPHASIS ON MODERNIZATION OF YEMENI ARMY. WE ALSO SOUGHT INITIATE DIALOGUE ON VARIOUS TECHNICAL QUESTIONS. IN CONTINUED ABSENCE OF REPORT ON SAUDI 1974 SURVEY OR ANY SAUDI REACTION TO THE AKINS LETTER, WE TOOK A NEW APPROACH AND VOLUNTEERED SEVERAL NEW LETTERS OF OFFER COVERING INITIAL PHASES OF AN ARMS PROGRAM. THROUGHOUT THIS YEAR, ALL WE HAVE HAD FROM SAUDIS ARE GENERALIZED STATEMENTS THAT THEY WERE INDEED PREPARING TO GO AHEAD WITH A PROGRAM

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 288586

4. YARG HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY IMPATIENT WITH FAILURE OF SAG TO ACT ON ITS MILITARY AID PROMISE. WHEN LT.COL. IBRAHIM AL-HAMDI ASSUMED POWER AS YAR PRESIDENT IN JUNE 1974, SAUDIS WERE GENERALLY SUPPORTIVE, ALTHOUGH THEY DISTRUSTED HAMDI'S MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD POSITION BETWEEN LEFTISTS AND TRIBAL CONSERVATIVES. HAMDI HAS STEADILY MOVED TO ELIMINATE LEFTISTS FROM GOVERNMENT, TO STRENGTHEN HIS OWN MILITARY BASE OF POWER, AND TO IMPROVE RELATIONS

WITH SAG. HE HAS, HOWEVER, RESISTED TOTAL COMPLIANCE WITH MORE EXTREME SAUDI PRESSURES, PREFERRING TO MAINTAIN MODICUM OF MODERATE LEFTIST SUPPORT. HE HAS EXCLUDED REACTIONARY TRIBAL FORCES AS WELL AS LEFTISTS FROM MEANINGFUL POLITICAL ROLE IN SANA.

5. SAUDIS HAVE RECENTLY INTENSIFIED THEIR SUPPORT OF CONSERVATIVE, OPPOSITIONIST TRIBAL LEADER AND PRESSED HAMDI TO GIVE INCREASED ROLE IN GOVERNMENT TO TRIBAL CONFEDERATION. HAMDI CONSIDERS THIS STANCE AS FUNDAMENTALLY AT ODDS WITH HIS PROGRAM OF REFORM AND MODERNIZATION.

6. GROWING YEMENI FRUSTRATION WITH SAUDI DELAYS ON ARMS PROGRAM LED THE YARG IN JULY OF THIS YEAR TO EXPLORE LONG-STANDING SOVIET OFFER OF ARMS AID. THIS PROBABLY ENTAILED A TACTICAL DECISION OF FLIRTATION WITH SOVIETS TO STIMULATE THE SAUDIS TO ACTION. (THE YEMENIS TOLD BOTH SAUDIS AND US THAT THEY HAD RECEIVED SUBSTANTIAL OFFER OF SOVIET MILITARY ASSISTANCE AND THAT, UNLESS THERE WERE PROGRESS ON SAUDI-U.S. PACKAGE, IT WOULD BE ACCEPTED.) SAUDIS RENEWED THEIR PROMISES OF MILITARY AID AND YEMENIS BACKED DOWN.

7. YAR CHIEF OF STAFF LT.COL. AL-GHASHMI VISITED RIYADH, AFTER SEVERAL DELAYS, EARLY IN NOVEMBER, EXPECTING TO DISCUSS DETAILS OF ARMS PROGRAM ALONG LINES OF REPEATED SAUDI ASSURANCES. GHASHMI RETURNED TO SANA EMPTYHANDED: ONLY THING AGREED TO WAS ESTABLISHMENT OF A SAUDI-YEMENI MILITARY COMMITTEE.

8. IN AFTERMATH OF A RECENT YEMENI MILITARY MISSION TO MOSCOW, YEMENIS HAVE NOW AGAIN RAISED PROSPECT OF SUBSTANTIAL DEAL WITH SOVIETS. WE HAVE BEEN TOLD BY FOREIGN
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 STATE 288586

MINISTER AL-ASNAG, QUOTING HAMDI, THAT AGREEMENT FOR SUBSTANTIAL QUANTITIES OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT (INCLUDING BETWEEN 50 AND 150 T54 AND T55 TANKS, SQUADRON OF MIG-21 AIRCRAFT, HEAVY ARTILLERY, AND AIR DEFENSE EQUIPMENT) HAS INDEED BEEN REACHED, TO BE PAID FOR BY SOVIETS AND WITH DELIVERIES TO BEGIN ALMOST IMMEDIATELY. HOWEVER, OTHER REPORTS SUGGEST THAT DEAL MAY BE ONLY ON AD-REFERENDUM BASIS, OR THAT DEAL MAY STILL BE PENDING. WE HAVE WARNED THE YEMENIS OF THE SUBSTANTIAL RISKS IN THEIR ACCEPTING SOVIET ARMS--AS IN PROBABLE LOSS OF ESSENTIAL SAUDI ECONOMIC AID.

9. INITIAL SAUDI REACTION TO REPORT OF YAG-SOVIET DEAL HAS BEEN OUTRAGE. PRINCE FAHD SAYS IT DEMONSTRATES THAT HAMDI CANNOT BE TRUSTED, AND THAT PERHAPS HE IS COMMUNIST.

10. CONTINUED MISUNDERSTANDING BETWEEN SAG AND YARG COULD HAVE SERIOUS REPERCUSSIONS FOR STABILITY IN SOUTHWESTERN AREA OF ARABIAN PENINSULA. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT SAUDIS WILL ABANDON HAMDI AND THROW THEIR SUPPORT BEHIND TRIBAL CONFEDERATION LEADER SHEIK ABDULLAH AL-AHMAR. THAT COULD FORCE HAMDI TO SHIFT FURTHER TO LEFT, AND EVOLVE INTO LEFT-RIGHT POLARIZATION WHICH CHARACTERIZED YAR IN 1960S. MEANWHILE, AKINS IN JIDDA BELIEVES THAT WE HAVE PRESSED SAUDIS AS HARD AS WE SHOULD AND FEAR THAT ADDITIONAL PRESSURE BY US ON SAG WOULD BE RESENTED.

11. WE HAVE SUGGESTED TO BOTH SIDES THAT PROMPT VISIT BY HAMDI TO RIYADH MAY BE IN ORDER. FACE-TO-FACE MEETING WITH SAUDI LEADERSHIP COULD HELP RESOLVE CURRENT DIFFERENCES AND, MOST IMPORTANT, PROVIDE OCCASION FOR SAUDIS FINALLY TO MOVE ON PENDING ARMS AID FOR YAR. FOR OUR PART, WE REMAIN READY TO MOVE QUICKLY ON ARMS ACTIONS ONCE SAUDIS HAVE ACTED.

12. MY VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA WILL PROVIDE ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITY FOR TALKS WITH SAUDIS ON THIS PROBLEM. INGERSOLL

UNQUOTE KISSINGER

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TOSEC, POLITICAL SITUATION, MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 DEC 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE288586
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: NEA/ARP:DPMOLINEAUX
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750425-0652
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751264/aaaacezd.tel
Line Count: 192
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <17 JUN 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <04 NOV 2003 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BRIEFING MEMORANDUM: CRISIS IN SAUDI-YEMENI RELATIONS
TAGS: PFOR, MASS, SA, YE, UR
To: SECRETARY
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006